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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 1239
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0040
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NISHA SINGH SCA/A

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ESTONIAN RESPONSE TO PROPOSED REGIONAL SOUTH
CIVILIAN-MILITARY PLANNING AND COORDINATION CELL

RE: STATE 85097

1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. SEE PARAGRAPH 3.

2. (SBU) In a conversation with Poloff on August 22, Christian-Marc Liflander, Director of Policy Planning Department at the Estonian MOD, Riho Rongelep, Director of Operations (MOD), Liis Jemmer from the Policy Planning Department (MOD) and Evelin Looman discussed the Government of Estonia (GOE) reaction to Secretary Gates proposal to create a Regional Command South Civilian-Military Planning and Coordination Cell (reftel). Liflander commented that overall, the GOE agrees that it would be beneficial to have a coordinated body on the ground to analyze lessons learned. At the same time, Liflander cautioned that any potential GOE contribution to the cell will be modest at best. If possible, the GOE would be content with being represented by Great Britain. Looman (MFA) echoed this statement by pointing out that the GOE's limited resources are prioritized for the PRT in Lashkar Gah. While the GOE is constantly looking for ways to strengthen and deepen its contributions to southern Afghanistan, it would be difficult to find a person to contribute to the cell. At the same time, the GOE is more than willing to cooperate with cell recommendations.

2. (SBU) Among the few concerns voiced during the meeting was the lack of reference to the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) in coordinating work with the cell. The inclusion of EUPOL is a very important element for the GOE. Liflander also questioned the proposed rotation cycle. He suggested that the cycles would need to be long enough for leaders on the ground to observe conditions and make educated recommendations. Questions were also raised concerning the scope of the cell's ability to initiate recommendations. Specifically, how will identified shortfalls be dealt with? Finally Riho Rongelep (MOD) asked whether or not the initiative for the RC-South cell is built upon the 'extraordinary' U.S. and UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) work in RC-East?

3. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: Post requests Department assistance in providing additional information in response to GOE inquiries concerning the proposed RC-South Civilian-Military Planning and Coordination Cell.
END ACTION REQUEST.